

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 JIDDA 03021 191332Z

46

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 NIC-01 EB-11 RSR-01 /142 W

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R 191250Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4408

INFO AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USINT CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 3021

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA, PINS

SUBJ: VISIT OF YASSER ARAFAT

REF: JIDDA 2945 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: PLO'S ARAFAT'S RECENT VISIT TO KINGDOM IS ACCORDED WARM WELCOME AND WIDE PRESS COVERAGE. THIS MAY BE ATTRIBUTED TO KING'S EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT WITH PALESTINIAN QUESTION AND TO WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT ON BALANCE SAG'S SECURITY AND ARAB STATUS THEREBY ENHANCED. END SUMMARY.

1. PLO CHIEF YASSER ARAFAT VISITED SAUDI ARABIA FOR FIVE DAYS.

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PAGE 02 JIDDA 03021 191332Z

ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN SHORT FACTUAL ARTICLES ANTICIPATING

HIS ARRIVAL, EMBOFF, WHO SAW DIRECTOR SAUDI NEWS AGENCY AT BEGINNING OF VISIT, INFORMED NO INSTRUCTION HAD BEEN GIVEN ON HOWN TO HANDLE VISIT. HOWEVER, IF PRESS-WISE ARAFAT CAME IN LIKE A LAMB, HIS VISIT IS NOW BEING ACCORDED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE WITH MANY FRONT-PAGE PICTURES AND LONG ARTICLES.

2. PER REFTTEL, ARAFAT ATTENDED KING FAISAL'S DINNER, NIGHT OF HIS ARRIVAL, IN SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSING CIRCUMSTANCES DURING WHICH HE WAS HASTILY ACCORDED JOINT HONORS IN RECEPTION LINE AND HAD TABLE SEATING WITH SHAIKH ISSA OF BAHRAIN. SUBSEQUENTLY, ARAFAT WAS RECIVED ON SEPARATE OCCASIONS FOR TALKS WITH KING, MINDEF PRINCE SULTAN AND MININT PRINCE FAHD, WHO ALSO GAVE DINNER IN HIS HONOR.

3. IN PUBLIC ADDRESS TO "SONS OF THE PEOPLE OF PALESTINE RESIDING IN THE KINGDOM," ARAFAT GAVE USUAL PEP TALK, EMPHASIZING "STEADFASTNESS" OF MOVEMENT AND STRENGTH OF PALESTINIAN "MARTYRS." REFERRING TO NIXON-BREZHNEV COMMUNIQUE, HE SAID QUOTE IMPORTANT POINT EMERGING FROM IT WAS RECOGNITION FOR FIRST TIME OF RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. UNQUOTE. RESPONDING TO QUESTION ABOUT "DEMOCRATIC STATE OF PALESTINE," ARAFAT CALLED IT BEST MOTTO RAISED BY RESISTANCE, BUT ADDED THAT "TIME HAS NOT YET COME TO TALK ABOUT IT." AFTER FURTHER BREASTTHUMPING, ARAFAT CONCLUDED DIALOGUE BY REFERRING TO WARM WELCOME HE HAD RECEIVED IN KINGDOM AND SAUDI ARABIA'S RENEWED INTENTIONS TO SUPPORT PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE TO EXTENT POSSIBLE.

4. ARAFAT DEPARTED FOR CAIRO JULY 18.

5. COMMENT: ARAFAT VISIT CAME AT END OF TOUR INCLUDING SYRIA, IRAQ, KUWAIT AND IN EACH PLACE PALESTINIAN LEADER SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN ACCORDED WARM OFFICIAL WELCOME. FROM WHAT WE KNOW OF ARAFAT'S METHODS, WE WOULD IMAGINE HE WAS SELF-INVITED TO SAUDI ARABIA. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS ALSO THAT ONCE HE HAD ARRIVED, SAUDIS DECIDED CAPITALIZE ON SITUATION GIVE APPEARANCE STRONG SUPPORT AND SYMPATHY FOR ARAFAT PERSONALLY AND FOR PALESTINIAN CAUSE, A TREND IN SAG POLICY WHICH HAS BEEN STEADILY MORE APPARENT IN RECENT MONTHS AS REFLECTED BY OPENING OF FATAH OFFICES IN RIYADH AND TOBUQ AND BY PUBLICITY GIVEN DURING LAST

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 JIDDA 03021 191332Z

MONTH TO "POPULAR" CONTRIBUTIONS TO MARTYRS' FUND (FATAH) WHICH TOTAL ALMOST \$200,000 FOR RIYADH ALONE.

6. OVERALL THESE EVENTS REPRESENT SOME SHIFT FROM CAREFUL, SLIGHTLY ALOOF ATTITUDE TOWARD FEDAYEEN AND THEIR LEADER DEMONSTRATED BY SAUDIS FOR LAST COUPLE OF YEARS. SAUDI POLICY TOWARD FEDAYEEN GUIDED HITHERTO BY GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS OF EXPEDIENCY: (A) MAINTENANCE OF SOME TIES WITH FEDAYEEN IS

GOOD INSURANCE AGAINST TERRORIST ACTS SUCH AS THOSE WHICH MIGHT STRIKE RATHER POORLY GUARDED OIL INSTALLATIONS (B) BELIEF THAT DIALOGUE WITH "GOOD" FEDAYEEN INCREASES THEIR STRENGTH AND INFLUENCE VIS-A-VIS "BAD" (PFLP, ETC) TYPE PALESTINIANS.

7. BUT ARAFAT'S RECEPTION THIS TIME SUFFICIENTLY MORE CORDIAL THAN IN PREVIOUS VISITS TO REFLECT SOMETHING MORE THAN JUST CLEVER MANEUVERING OF HOSTS BY CANNY GUEST. WE ATTRIBUTE IT TO KING'S OWN EMOTIONAL PREOCCUPATION WITH PALESTINIAN ISSUE, DETERMINATION PLAY A LARGER ROLE IN ARAB AFFAIRS, AND A GENERAL QUICKENING OF SAUDI INTEREST IN ARAB-ISRAEL PROBLEM. CRITICISM FROM IRAQ AND LIBYA IS DEFLECTED. SAUDI ARABIA'S SATISFACTORY TIES AND INFLUENCE WITH CAIRO ARE RE-INFORCED.  
THACHER

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## Message Attributes

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